Story of Prince Dighvu

Ja 371 Dīghitikosalajātaka The Birth Story about (King) Dīghiti of Kosala (5s)

In the present, two sets of monks fall into a dispute over a disciplinary matter, and, although rebuked by the Buddha, continue with it. The Buddha tells a story of a prince whose parents were killed by a foreign king. Later, when he had his enemy at his mercy, he remembered his father's teaching and forgave him.

The Bodhisatta = prince Dīghāvu (Dīghāvukumāro), members of the royal family = the mother and father (mātāpitaro).

Present Source: Ja 428 Kosambī, Quoted at: Ja 371 Dīghitikosala, Present Compare: Vin Mv 10 (1.342), Dhp-a I.5 Kosambaka.

Keywords: Quarrels, Forgiveness.

"You are within my power." [3.139] {3.211} This story, the Teacher, while dwelling at Jetavana, told concerning some quarrelsome folk from Kosambī. When they came to Jetavana, the Teacher addressed them at the time of their reconciliation and said: "Monks, you are my lawful sons in the faith, begotten by the words of my mouth. Children ought not to trample underfoot the counsel given them by their father, but you follow not my admonition. Sages of old, when the men who had slain their parents and seized upon their kingdom fell into their hands in the forest, did not put them to death, though they were confirmed rebels, but they said: "We will not trample on the counsel given us by our parents." And hereupon he related a story of the past. In this Jātaka, both the incident that led to the story and the story itself are fully outlined in the Saṅghabhedakajātaka [Ja 428].

This story, the Teacher told while dwelling in the Ghosita park near Kosambī, concerns certain quarrelsome folk at Kosambī. The incident that led to the story is found in The Section on the Vinaya relating to Kosambī. Here is a summary. At that time, it is said, two monks lived in the same house, the one versed in the Vinaya, the other in the Suttas. The latter of these, one day having occasion to visit the lavatory, went out, leaving the surplus water for rinsing the mouth in a vessel. Afterwards, the one versed in the Vinaya went in and, seeing the water come out, asked his companion if the water had been left there by him. He answered, "Yes, sir." "What! Do you not know that this is wrong?" "No, I was not aware of it." "Well, monk, it is wrong." "Then I will atone

for it." "But if you did it inadvertently and heedlessly, it is not wrong." So he became as one who saw no wrong in what was wrongful.

The Vinaya scholar said to his pupils, "This Sutta scholar, though falling into wrong, is not aware of it." They, on seeing the other monk's pupils, said: "Your master, though falling into wrong, does not recognise its wrongfulness." They went and told their master. He said: "This Vinaya scholar before said it was no wrong, and now he says it is wrong: he speaks falsely." They went and told the others, "Your master speaks falsely." Thus, they stirred up a quarrel, one with another. Then the Vinaya scholar, finding an opportunity, went through the form of suspension of the monk for refusing to see his offence. Thenceforth, even the laypeople who provided the monks with necessaries were divided into two factions. The nuns, too, who accept their admonitions, and tutelary gods, with their friends and intimates and deities from those that rest in space to those of the Brahma World, even all such as were unconverted, formed two parties, and the uproar reached to the abode of the Akaniṭṭha gods.

Then a certain monk drew near to the Tathāgata, and announced the view of the suspending side who said: "The man is legally suspended," and the view of the followers of the suspended one, who said: "He is illegally suspended," and the practice of those who though forbidden by the suspending side, still gathered round in support of him. The Fortunate One said: "There is a schism, yes, a schism in the Saṅgha," and he went to them and pointed out the misery involved in suspension to those that suspended, and the misery following upon the concealment of the wrong to the opposite party, and so departed.

Again, when they were holding the Uposatha and similar services in the same place, within the boundary, and were quarrelling in the refectory. Elsewhere, he laid down the rule that they were to sit down together, one by one, from each side in turn. And hearing that they were still quarrelling in the monastery, he went there and said: "Enough, monks, let us have no quarrelling." And one of the heretical side, not wishing to annoy the Fortunate One, said: "Let the Fortunate One, the master of the Dhamma, dwell quietly at ease, enjoying the bliss he has already obtained in this life. We shall make ourselves notorious by this quarrelling, altercation, disputing and contention."

[The king of Benares, Brahmadatta, has killed Prince Dīghāvu's parents, King Dīghiti of Kosala and his queen.]

Then, monks, prince Dīghāvu, having gone to a jungle, having cried and wept, having dried his tears, having entered Benares, having gone to an elephant stable near the king's palace, spoke thus to the elephant trainer, "I want to learn the craft, teacher." He said: "Well then, my good youngster, learn it." Then, monks, prince Dīghāvu, rising in the night towards dawn, sang in a sweet voice in the elephant stable and played

the lute. And monks, Brahmadatta, the king of Kāsi, rising in the night towards dawn, heard the singing in the sweet voice and the lute-playing in the elephant stable; having listened to, he asked the people, “Who, good sirs, rising in the night towards dawn, was singing in a sweet voice and playing a lute in the elephant stable?”

“Sire, a youngster, a pupil of such and such an elephant trainer, rising in the night towards dawn, was singing in a sweet voice and playing a lute in the elephant stable.” He said: “Well then, good sirs, bring that youngster along.” And, monks, these people, having answered, “Yes, sire,” in assent to Brahmadatta, the king of Kāsi, brought along prince Dīghāvu. The king said: “Did you, my good youngster, rising… sing in a sweet voice and play a lute in the elephant stable?” “Yes, sire,” he said. “Well, then, do you, my good youngster, sing and play the lute before me?” And, monks, prince Dīghāvu, having answered, “Yes, sire,” in assent to Brahmadatta, the king of Kāsi, longing for success, sang in a sweet voice and played the lute. Then, monks, Brahmadatta, the king of Kāsi, spoke thus to Prince Dīghāvu, “Do you, my good youngster, attend on me?” Then, monks, prince Dīghāvu answered, “Yes, sire,” in assent to Brahmadatta, the king of Kāsi. Then, monks, Prince Dīghāvu became an earlier riser than Brahmadatta, the king of Kāsi; he lay down later. He was a willing servant, eager to please, speaking affectionately. Then, monks, Brahmadatta, the king of Kāsi, soon established Prince Dīghāvu in a confidential position of trust.

Then, monks, Brahmadatta, the king of Kāsi, spoke thus to prince Dīghāvu, “Well now, good youngster, harness a chariot, I will go out hunting.” And, monks, prince Dīghāvu, having answered, “Yes, sire,” in assent to Brahmadatta, the king of Kāsi, having harnessed a chariot, spoke thus to Brahmadatta, the king of Kāsi, “A chariot is harnessed for you, sire; for this, you may think it is now the right time.” Then, monks, Brahmadatta, the king of Kāsi, mounted the chariot; prince Dīghāvu drove it, and he drove it in such a manner that the army went by one way and the chariot by another. Then, monks, Brahmadatta, the king of Kāsi, having gone far, spoke thus to prince Dīghāvu, “Well now, good youngster, unharness the chariot; as I am tired, I will lie down.” And, monks, prince Dīghāvu, having answered, “Yes, sire,” in assent to Brahmadatta, the king of Kāsi, having unharnessed the chariot, sat down cross-legged on the ground. Then, monks, Brahmadatta, the king of Kāsi, lay down, having laid his head on prince Dīghāvu’s lap, and because he was tired, he fell asleep at once.

Now prince Dīghāvu, having found the king of Benares lying on his side in the forest, seized him by his top-knot and said: “Now will I cut into fourteen pieces the marauder who slew my father and mother.” And at the very moment when he was brandishing his sword, he recalled the advice given him by his parents, and he thought: “Though I should sacrifice my own life, I will not trample underfoot their counsel. I will content myself with frightening him.” And he uttered the first verse:

1. “You are within my power, O king, As prone you liest here: What stratagem have you to bring Deliverance from your fear?”

Then the king uttered the second verse:

2. “Within your power, my friend, I lie All helpless on the ground, Nor know I any means whereby Deliverance may be found.” {3.212}

Then the Bodhisatta repeated the remaining verses:

3. “Good deeds and words alone, not wealth, O king, in hour of death can any comfort bring.
4. This man abused me, that struck me a blow, A third o’ercame and robbed me long ago. All such as harbour feelings of this kind, To mitigate their wrath are ne’er inclined.
5. He did abuse and buffet me of yore, He overcame me and oppressed me sore. [3.140]

Those who refuse to entertain thoughts appease their wrath and live at one again.

6. Not hate, but love alone makes hate to cease: This is the everlasting law of peace.”

After these words, the Bodhisatta said: “I will not do you a wrong, sire. But do you slay me?” And he placed his sword in the king’s hand. The king, too, said: “Neither will I wrong you.” And he swore an oath, and went with him to the city, and presented him to his councillors and said: “This, sirs, is Prince Dīghāvu, the son of the king of Kosala. He has spared my life. {3.213} I may not do him any harm.” And so saying, he gave him his daughter in marriage, and established him in the kingdom that had belonged to his father. Thenceforth, the two kings reigned happily and harmoniously together.

The Teacher here ended his lesson and identified the Jātaka, “The father and mother of those days are now members of the royal household, and prince Dīghāvu was myself.”